



Transformation Facts from Fort Lewis

Transformation is the process that is taking the Army from where it was in the late 1990s to the objective force. Transformation is designed to take advantage of opportunities presented by emerging technologies and changes in the Army's missions in the post-Cold War world.

The ultimate result of transformation, the Objective Force, will enable our Army to deploy with the speed of our current light forces, but arrive with all the crushing combat power of our heavy forces.



Fort Lewis soldiers train in the shadow of 14,410 foot Mount Rainier.

While the journey toward the Objective Force continues the Army is converting six brigades to the Interim Force -- using off-the-shelf weapons systems and current cutting-edge technology -- to a medium-weight configuration. The initial Stryker Brigade Combat Teams are Fort Lewis' 3rd Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division, nearly complete in the process of transformation, and 1st Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, which began the process in Jan 2002 and will be complete in May 2004.

In November 2000, the Department of the Army announced the selection of the LAV III, with specific modifications, as the Interim Armored Vehicle that will provide the SBCT's basic weapon and maneuver platform. When completely fielded, the IAV known as the Stryker, will come in 10 variants, ranging from the basic Infantry Carrier Vehicle to a Mobile Gun System armed with a 105mm auto-loading cannon. While awaiting the delivery of the Strykers, soldiers of the SBCT trained with surrogate equipment drawn from Army stocks or leased from our Canadian, German and Italian allies. Surrogate vehicles enabled units to train as they would with the Stryker and establish SOP's and refine doctrine.

In understanding what transformation is, it is important to understand what it is not. It is not an experiment: Using experience and lessons learned over the last 10 years of Army experimentation and operations, the SBCTs are being fielded as fully capable war fighting organizations.

It does not reduce the Army's combat capabilities: The light forces of XVIII Airborne Corps that provide our quick-response, forced-entry capability will remain unchanged. The heavy forces like those that won in Desert Storm will stay fully mission capable. Indeed, these Legacy Forces will continue to be modernized and upgraded until the Objective Force becomes a reality.

Transformation does not replace Abrams tanks with lightly armored, medium weight armored vehicles. The Legacy Force remains. By converting six of the Army's brigades to Stryker Brigade Combat Team configuration, equipped with a highly mobile family of medium armored vehicles and state-of-the-art command, control and communications systems, we fill a gap in our capabilities created by changes in the operating environment. The SBCT is organized, equipped and trained for the contemporary operating environment. The SBCT adds capabilities to a joint force commander's resources; it takes away nothing.

The core of the Army's Transformation will always remain its soldiers. The units being fielded at Fort Lewis are made up of highly motivated, enthusiastic professionals. They are backed by thousands of soldiers and civilians on Fort Lewis and around the rest of the Army, who are providing the doctrine, planning and support to make this initiative a success.

